

## Student Recognition

### Local Level:

Each jurisdiction participating in the **Challenge** has established a Do the Write Thing committee to coordinate the program. The top ten writing finalists will be honored at a banquet in April 2008 held in Helena, MT. The top ten writings will be bound and published.

### National Level:

Each Do the Write Thing committee will designate two national finalists - the boy and girl from each of our 20 participating jurisdictions who submit the most thought-provoking entries for the **2008 Challenge**. The **National Campaign to Stop Violence** will invite the two national finalists, each student's teacher, and one parent or guardian per student, to attend the **Do the Write Thing Challenge** National Recognition Week activities in Washington, DC in July 2008. One representative of the jurisdiction's middle school system will be invited to the National Recognition Week activities. Travel costs for each jurisdiction's official delegation to the National Recognition Week Activities will be paid by our primary sponsor, the **Kuwait-America Foundation**, the **National Campaign to Stop Violence**, or the jurisdiction's Do the Write Thing Committee through a grant awarded by the Montana Governor's appointed Youth Justice Council.

During past National Recognition Weeks, **Challenge** National Finalists have met with the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, and Members of Congress to discuss the problem of youth violence. In addition, our students have been honored at embassy receptions hosted by the Ambassador to the United States from the State of Kuwait. At last year's National Recognition Ceremony in the Senate Caucus Room on Capitol Hill, our National Finalists read excerpts from their writings to a gathering of national leaders, including key Senators and Representatives. A book containing the students' writings was placed in the Library of Congress.

## Participating Teachers

Please complete the teacher survey located on the following website (<http://www.dtwt.org/pdfs/teachersurvey.pdf>) once your students have submitted their writings to you and send it to the address below:

**National Campaign to Stop Violence**  
**910 17th Street, NW, Suite 200**  
**Washington, DC 20006**

The National Campaign and the Do the Write Thing committees need the survey information and statistics to administer the **Challenge**.

Download a copy of this brochure for distribution at [www.mbcc.mt.gov](http://www.mbcc.mt.gov).

Be Montana's first 7th & 8th grade students to take a stand against Youth Violence!

## Take the challenge:



**Sheryl Burright**  
**Juvenile Justice Specialist**  
**Board of Crime Control**  
**PO Box 201408**  
**Helena, MT 59620**  
**Phone: (406) 444-3651**

**2007/2008 IS MONTANA'S  
FIRST YEAR OF PARTICIPATION**

**[www.dtwt.org](http://www.dtwt.org)**



# Program Rules

- Students may use any form of written expression (e.g., essays, poems, plays, or songs) as long as the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. All entries must be the work product of only one student.
- Student entries, at minimum, should address three questions: **How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?** Writings that do not address these questions will not advance in the judging process.
- Entries should be approximately 500 to 1000 words in length. Written forms of expression, that may be shorter by nature, may contain fewer than 500 words.
- Entries must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used, and the pages should be numbered.
- Entries must be in English.
- If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's material in his or her entry, the entry must cite the author's name or the source of the material. **Writings based on plagiarism will not advance in the judging process.**
- **Entries must have a cover sheet with the consent statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian.** No personal information should appear on the body of the written entry. Entries without a signed cover sheet will not advance in the judging process. **(Download cover sheets at: <http://www.dtw.org/the-challenge/Cover%20Sheet.doc>)**
- Entries must be submitted with one photocopy of the writing.
- Entries must be submitted in the form that they are received from the student writer. Editing for content, grammar, or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted.

## Submission Deadlines

Participating teachers must collect all entries with a cover sheet attached and submit them to the DtWT school coordinator in his or her principal's office by Friday, March 7, 2008, postdated no later than 5:00 PM. All DtWT school coordinators must submit their school's entries to the DtWT school system coordinator listed below on Monday, March 10, 2008, postdated no later than 5:00 PM:

**Sheryl Burright**  
**Juvenile Justice Specialist**  
**Montana Board of Crime Control**  
**PO Box 201408**  
**Helena, MT 59620-1408**

## Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by a panel of judges selected by your jurisdiction's Do the Write Thing committee, the coalition of business, community and governmental leaders that oversees and administers the **Challenge** in your area. Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions: **How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence? Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for judging the entries.**

Students should be encouraged to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence and to offer specific suggestions about what they can do as individuals to reduce violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. Students should be encouraged to share personal experiences about the impact of violence on their lives and the lives of their peers. The panel of judges in your area examine how well your students present their views on these matters.

*Teachers, please send us the writings and the coversheets of all students who submit an entry. In this program, everyone who makes a good-faith effort to participate deserves recognition and to have his or her work considered in the judging process.*

## Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the **Challenge**. However, over the years we have found that students and their teachers gain much from the connections that can result from the exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers have indicated that they are amazed at the openness and honesty of these classroom discussions. They also indicate that these discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach crisis proportions.

Many of the teachers whose classes have participated in the **Challenge** in the past have invited outside speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles, which emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problem of violence, have proven to be particularly useful.

The National Campaign to Stop Violence's 2002 **Discussion Paper on the Causes of and Solutions for Youth Violence** can be found on the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** website at [www.dtw.org](http://www.dtw.org). The discussion paper is based on the writings of last year's National Finalists—the boy and girl from each of our 20 participating jurisdictions who submitted the most thought-provoking entries. Teachers may download and copy this material for their classes.

Below are some questions designed to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the **Challenge**.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- How does violence affect your daily lives?
- Where are you confronted by violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you do as an individual to reduce youth violence in your community?